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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 /098 W
----------210842Z 039217 /21
R 210551Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3574
INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA
AMCONSUL DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 2362

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ET, PINT
SUBJ: AFAR ASSEMBLY DEMANDS CREATION OF AFAR ADMINISTRATIVE REGION

REF: A) ADDIS ABABA 2176, B) PARIS 11438

SUMMARY: IN MEETING HELD BETWEEN EPMG AND AFAR REPRESENTATIVES, BROAD RECOMMENDATIONS MADE WHICH HAVE POTENTIAL FOR CEVELOPING CLOSE LINKS BETWEEN CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND ETHIOPIA'S AFAR COMMUNITY. RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE CREATION OF AFAR ADMINISTRATIVE REGION, INCREASED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND SOCIAL SERVICES FOR AFARS, ARMING OF "PROGRESSIVE" AFARS, AND ENCOURAGING RETURN TO GOVERNMENT FOLD OF FOLLOWERS OF ALI MIRAH. MEETING CONFIDENTIAL

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ADDRESSED BY AFAR LEADERS FROM DJIBOUTI AND CRITICIZED CONSERVATIVE ARABS AND SOMALIS. IF EPMG SUCCESSFUL IN ACHIEVING RAPPROACHEMENT WITH AFARS, ITS ABILITY TO REACT TO EVENTS IN DJIBOUTI WILL BE GREATLY IMPROVED. END SUMMARY.

1. APRIL 19 ETHIOPIAN HERALD REPORTED COMPLETION OF

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APRIL 8-15 MEETING IN GEWANE (NORTHERN HARARGHE) OF
EPMG AND AFAR REPRESENTATIVES. EPMG REPRESENTED BY
MEMBERS OF DIRG AND POLITICAL OFFICE OF MASS
ORGANIZATION AFFARIS (POMOA); AFARS BY 400 REPRE-
SENTITIVES FROM FIVE ADMINISTRATIVE RETIONS. IN
OPENING ADDRESS, PMAC MEMBER LT. NEGUSSIE NEGESSA
REPORTEDLY STRESSED EPMG COMMITTED TO PROMOTE
CONDITIONS LEADING TO REGIONAL AUTONOMY AND TO RESOLVE
IN A SCIENTIFIC WAY CONTRADICTIONS ON QUESTION OF
NATIONALITIES. MEETING ALSO ADDRESSED BY ISMAEL
IBRAHIM OF POPULAR MOVEMENT FOR LIBERATION OF DJIBOUTI (MPL) AND
OMER MOHAMMED KAMIL OF NATIONAL UNION FOR INDEPENDENCE
OF DJIBOUTI (UNI). BOTH STRESSED THREAT TO EJIBOUTI FROM
IMPERIALISTS AND REACTIONARY ARABS WHILE PRAISING EPMG
POLICY VIS-A-VIS DJIBOUTI.

2. MEETING EXAMINED SECURITY PROBLEMS IN AFAR AREAS
WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON READ SEA, AWASY VALLEY,BAB EL-MANDEB
AND ADDIS-DJIBOUTI AND ADDIS-ASSAB TRANSPORT LINES. MEETING
REQUESTED ARMING AND TRAINING OF LARGE NUMBER OF "PROGRESSIVE"
AFARS TO FORM PEOPLES MILITIA, AND ESTABLISHMENT OF "COAST
GUARD MILITIA".

3. ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SIDE, MEETING MADE SWEEPING
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES, INNOVATIONS, AND
IMPROVEMENTS IN RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMS, EDUCATIONS,
HEALTH FACILITIES, TRANSPORT, COMMUNICATIONS, LIVESTOCK
BREEDING PROGRAMS, DEVELOPMENT OF WELLS, GRAZING AREAS,
FISHING, SALT COLLECTION, AND LIGHT INDUSTRY. MEETING
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ALSO CALLED FOR END OF TRIBAL RAIDING AND PEACEFUL
SETTLEMENT OF INTER-TRIBAL DISPUTES AS WELL AS
CONDEMNING MANY TRADITIONAL AFAR PRACTICES IN AREAS
OF MARRIAGE, RELIGION, AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS.

4. MEETING CONDEMNED ALI MIRAH AND INVITED THOSE WHO
HAD ALLIED THEMSELVES WITH HIM TO REJOIN PEACEFUL
SOCIETY. IT CALLED FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF SOCIAL
COMMISSION IN AWASSA AND ASSAB PROVINCES TO REHABI-
LITATE AND POLITICIZE FUTURE RETURNEES. MEETING
CONDEMNED REACTIONARY ARAB LEADERS, PARTICULARLY
SAUDIS AND SUDANESE, AS WELL AS FRENCH MACHINATIONS
TO FOIL INDEPENDENCE OF DJIBOUTI BY CREATING
ANIMOSITY BETWEEN ETHNIC GROUPS. IT ALSO CONDEMNED
SOMALI EXPANSIONIST POLICY IN DJIBOUTI AND CALLED
FOR SOMALI RENUNCIATION OF ITS CLAIM ON TFAI.

5. MEETING CREATED TWO STANDING COMMITTEES OF SEVEN
MEMBERS. FIRST TO PRESENT VARIOUS DECISIONS AND

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RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENT AND ENSURE IMPLEMENTATION.
SECOND COMMITTEE TO SEEK SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS WHICH
MAY ARISE BETWEEN AFAR AND OTHER NEIGHBORING NATIONALI-
TIES AS WELL AS SETTLE INTERNAL AFAR DISPUTES. MEETING
ALSO DECIDED THAT SECOND MEETING OF AFAR REPRE-
SENTATIVES TO BE HELD IN TWO HEARS. MEETING CONCLUDED
BY CALLING FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF AFAR ADMIN-
ISTRATIVE REGION, NOTING THAT SUCH A COURSE WOULD
PAVE WAY FOR REGIONAL AUTONOMY, STIMULATE DEVELOPMENT
AND TRANSLATE INTO PRACTICAL TERMS AFAR ROLE IN
REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS.

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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 2362

COMMENT: EPMG HAS APPARENTLY RECOGNIZED UTILITY
OF MAKING ITS PEACE WITH AFARS, A STEP WHICH CAN
STRENGTHEN ITS HAND VIS-A-VIS ERITREA AND DJIBOUTI
AND HELP SAFEGUARD ITS ACCESS TO RED SEA. CREATION
OF AFAR ADMINISTRATIVE REGION WOULD REMOVE RED SEA
PANHANDLE FROM ERITREAN ADMINISTRATIVE REGION AND
CHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE STATUS OF HELF OF RED SEA
COAST CONTAINING ECONOMICALLY VITAL ASSAB PORT AND
REFINERY. AFARS HAVE NOT BEEN ACTIVE IN ERITREAN

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SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT, AND CREATION OF ARMED AFAR
MILITIA COULD HELP OFFSET EFFORTS OF ERITREANSECESSIONISTS.
IF EPMG CAN GAIN SUPPORT OF AFARS, ITS ABILITY TO REACT TO
DEVELOPMENTS IN DJIBOUTI OR TO INSTIGATE APPROPRIATE
DEVELOPMENTS IN TFAI WIL BE GREATLY IMPROVED. ATTEMPT TOWARDS
RAPPROACHEMENT WITH AFARS, PROGRESSIVE AFARS AND FACT THAT
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MEETING ADDRESSED BY BOTH UNI AND MPL REPRESENTATIVES
INDICATES EPMG CLEARING ITS DECKS FOR PROBLEMS IN
BOTH ERITREA AND DJIBOUTI.

7. EMBASSY ALSO NOTES THAT PRESS REFERRED TO CREATION
OF NEW ADMINISTRATIVE REGION RATHER THAN CREATION OF
AUTONOMOUS REGION. SOVIETS HERE HAVE STRESSED TO
EPMG APPROPRIATENESS OF THEIR SYSTEM OF SEMI-
AUTONOMOUS AND AUTONOMOUS REPUBLICS AS METHOD OF
COPING WITH ETHIOPIA'S COMPLEX NATIONALITY PROBLEMS,
PRIMARILY IN CONTEXT OF SOMALI AREAS. EPMG
APPARENTLY YET UNWILLING TO MOVE THAT FAR, WHICH NO
DOUBT RELATED TO FACT THAT IF AUTONOMOUS REGION
CREATED FOR AFARS, GOVERNMENT'S POSITIONS ON ADMIN-
ISTRATIVE STATUS OF ERITREA AND OGADEN WOULD LIKELY
HAVE TO BE SIMILARLY CHANGED. IN VIEW OF PRESENT
EXTENT OF SOVIET INFLUENCE ON EPMG DECISION MAKERS,
POSSIBILITY OF FUTURE EPMG ACCEPTANCE OF SUCH AN
APPROACH SHOULD NOT BE RULED OUT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INDEPENDENCE, MEETING REPORTS, NATIONALISTS, PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 21-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ADDIS02362
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770138-0685
Format: TEL
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770436/aaaabdyk.tel
Line Count: 202
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 ADDIS ABABA 2176, 77 PARIS 11438
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 31-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2743054
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AFAR ASSEMBLY DEMANDS CREATION OF AFAR ADMINISTRATIVE REGION
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PDEV, ET, FT, (NEGUSSIE NEGESSA), (IBRAHIM, ISMAEL), (KAMIL, MOHAMMED OMER)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/62feb0a1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009